



Committee on Rules
U.S. House of Representatives
H-312 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515-6269

Statement of David Dreier
Chairman, Committee on Rules

Before the Committee on House Administration

March 1, 2011

Chairman Lungren, Ranking Member Brady, and Members of the Committee, I am pleased to appear today in support of the 112th Congress funding request of the Committee on Rules. The request before you continues the tradition of lean funding that has characterized the Rules Committee in the past during majorities of both parties, but will still allow us to perform our critical institutional role during the months and years ahead.

THE RULES COMMITTEE IS A REWARDING, BUT DIFFICULT, ASSIGNMENT

This marks my fifth appearance before this Committee as Chairman of the Rules Committee. The Rules Committee is both traffic cop and first responder: we assist the Speaker in moving the routine business of the Majority efficiently and fairly, while at the same time standing ready to respond in the event of unforeseen circumstances.

This makes serving on the Rules Committee simultaneously rewarding and challenging. More than any other standing committee, our Members and staff must be agile to respond to the difficulties endemic to running a majority. The budget that my ranking member, Ms. Slaughter, and I have submitted allows us to maintain our ability to meet those challenges while recognizing that all committees must do their part to control spending.

THE 112TH CONGRESS BUDGET REQUEST

We are requesting total budget authority of approximately \$6.8 million divided equally between this year and next. Because the Committee has been very judicious in its budget requests in the past, this request is \$357,000 less than the Committee received in the last congress, and even about \$69,000 less than the Committee received in the 110th Congress. This reflects a 5 percent reduction from our level granted for the 111th Congress.

Just over 90 percent of our requested funds go to personnel compensation. The remainder is designated for needed equipment, supplies, and services.

THE MINORITY WILL RECEIVE A FULL 1/3 SHARE OF THE BUDGET

This Congress marks an important turning point in the Rules Committee's Minority-Majority relationship. While in the past, the minority has controlled a full 1/3 of the personnel compensation budget, along with a third of the staff slots, this year marks the first time that the Minority will be given full control over one-third of the entire budget. While there have not generally been issues in the past with the Minority receiving funding for needed services or equipment, this change grants the Minority a level of autonomy that neither party has previously enjoyed. It is an important change, and one that is long overdue.

WHILE LEAN, THIS BUDGET FUNDS IMPORTANT PRIORITIES

Even with the cuts we made compared to past years, we are still funding important priorities:

- **Webcasting.** As we promised in the Pledge to America, we have opened the deliberations of the Rules Committee to anyone with an Internet connection. With the assistance of the Chief Administrative Officer and the Clerk, we now webcast every hearing and meeting of the committee, and maintain archives of those recordings on our website. We are involved in a pilot program with the same vendor that provides services to the Clerk's HouseLive program. While we understand that the CAO is looking into a broader contract with the vendor for all committees, we will continue working with them individually until that contract is in place.

Separately, I have asked this committee to fund the permanent installation of audio and video broadcast equipment in our hearing room. This will improve the quality of our broadcasts, and allow the CAO to redeploy the equipment he has loaned the committee to other uses.

- **Automation Tools.** We are continuing development of the CORE database and workflow automation tool. This custom software was started during the 109th Congress, and was significantly improved during the last four years. We will be focusing on improving the usability of the system, as well as extending its capabilities to integrate it more tightly with our website.
- **Transparency.** We are continuing our efforts to improve transparency. We have started posting the text of bills and resolutions in the House-standard XML format on our website. We intend to work closely with the Office of Legislative Counsel and the Office of the Clerk to enable the posting of committee reports and amendments in this more flexible format as well.

It is also important to note that the Rules Committee's website is serving as the official repository for text of legislation to be considered on the House floor until

the Committee on House Administration designates another official location for those documents.

CONCLUSION

In all, I believe that this is a fair budget request. It maintains our history of wisely using our resources and providing the House a favorable return on its investment.

Thank you, and I stand ready to answer any questions you may have.